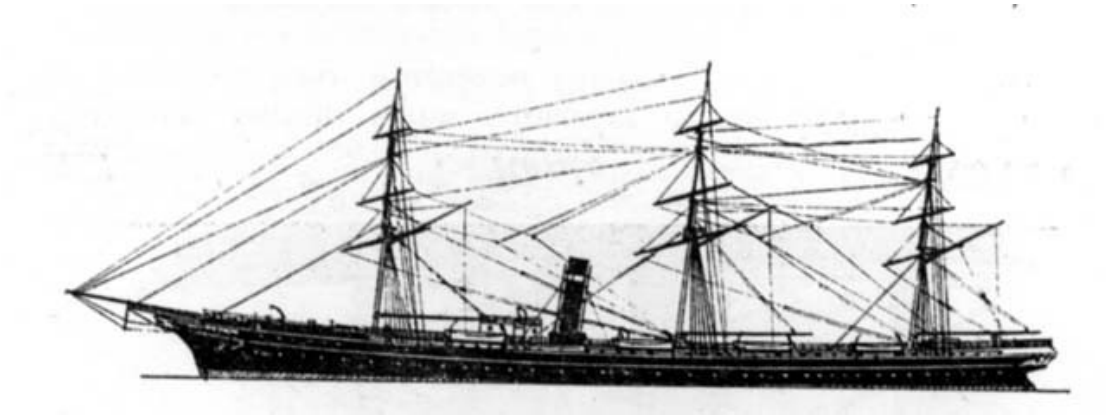
Richard Penrose and his daughters

“A Cornish Family”

Richard Penrose was born in 1848 and grew up with his 11 brothers and sisters in the family house on the Goosegwarra farm estate in St Agnes. His father, also Richard, had been born in Redruth in 1820 and had established himself as a copper mine agent. His grandfather Arthur Penrose had been an assayer for the mines.

Richard started work in the mines where his father was still a mine agent. However, there was much talk of the gold being found in Northern California following the 1849 gold rush and, at the age of 19, the young Richard set out to find his fortune, following his elder brother to Nevada County, California.



The steam and sail ship *City of Paris*, aboard which Richard Penrose sailed to New York

He sailed from Liverpool aboard the *City of Paris*, a large transatlantic steam and sailing ship carrying 865 steerage passengers and a further 55 in cabins, and arrived in New York on 13th of April 1868. He then crossed the continent, by railroad and by wagon, as the two ends of the first transcontinental railroad were not joined until the following year.

The Cornish migration to Nevada County began in 1849 with the discovery of gold, and by the 1870’s large numbers of Cornish tin miners were arriving. They were skilled hardrock miners, and brought with them the sophisticated water pump technology that had been developed in Cornwall. It was a common ambition among the miners to bring their family members to the United States. Many worked in the Empire Mine in Grass Valley, which was begun in 1850 and operated until 1956, by which time it had over 350 miles of underground passages. At one time three-quarters of the

population of Grass Valley was Cornish. The site is now the Empire Mine Historic Park.

In 1871 Eliza Ellen Gribble, the 19 year old daughter of the Illogan farmers Nicholas & Eliza, joined Richard. They were married that year and had their first child Ellen in Grass Valley, Nevada County.

Penrose and Gribble are locative names, derived from descriptions of places in the Cornish language. Penrose was pen ros, the end of a moor and Gribble, cryb bell, a distant ridge. As with Welsh, the Cornish language was designed for speaking rather than writing. The initial consonants of words are changed depending on the previous syllable according to strict rules to make enunciation easier. For example in Welsh, gwlad means land and tadau, fathers. Land of my Fathers, though, is 'Hen wlad fy nhadau', making it easier to say, and, of course, sing. Similarly, in the closely related Cornish language, cryb bell became Gribble.

The couple did not stay in California, and in 1875 came back to Illogan, where they had their second child, Lucretia Mabel.

The home of Richard & Eliza Ellen Penrose in Churchtown, Illogan

Richard gave up mining, and set up as a beer & porter merchant. He later established a mineral water manufacturing business making the flavoured fizzy drinks such as ginger beer and dandelion & burdock which were popular at the time.

A formal portrait of Richard Penrose junior in later life

The process for artificially aerating water was discovered in 1783 by Jacob Schweppe, a German born Swiss, but it was not until 1835 that the company he founded, Schweppes & Co of London, began adding fruit flavours, starting with lemon. They later added ginger beer and other flavours to the range and the increasing popularity of these drinks led to the establishment of a large number of mineral water factories across the country.

Richard Penrose died in 1899 at the age of 51 and is buried in Illogan churchyard. Eliza, who took over the business until her death six years later at the age of 53, is buried with him.

The memorial cross to Richard & Eliza Ellen Penrose in Illogan churchyard

Richard and Eliza Penrose had six children, all girls, although one, named Ethel the same as her later sister, died at the age of six months. The family played an important part in the social life of the village.

Richard Penrose and his family.
Mabel, Richard, Ethel, Fanny, Eliza, Ella and Lottie

Richard and Eliza's eldest daughter, **Ellen Penrose** was known as Ella. She married Benjamin Eddy of St Just in 1900 and had six children there. The first, Edna May Eddy, was named after a well-known actress of the time.

Edna May was the toast of London and New York at the turn of the twentieth century. Millionaires sought her hand in marriage, trainloads of admirers would follow her wherever she went, she commanded some of the highest fees of her day, and her exploits were reported on both sides of the Atlantic.
In 1897 Edna played Violet Grey in "The Belle of New York" at the New York Casino. The following year Edna and the Casino players took the production to the London stage appearing at the Shaftesbury Theatre.

Edna May Eddy married Stanley Tonkin, and lived all her life in West Cornwall. She died in 2001 just two months short of her 100th birthday.

Ella's second child Richard Percival Eddy was born in 1902. His daughter, Astrid, still lives in Cornwall.

Harold, Ella's third child, had one son, also Harold Eddy. Ella, her fourth, was born in 1906. She married Billy Semmens and had two children, Christian and Patrick. Arthur, the fifth child, had three children, Roger, Judith and Peter, and died in 2006 at the age of 97. Mary Eddy, Benjamin and Ella's sixth and last child, had one child, David Olds.

Of Benjamin and Ella's six children, five lived into their nineties, although none quite made it to their 100th birthday.

The second daughter, **Lucretia Mabel Penrose** was born in Illogan, Cornwall, on 23 July 1876. As a young woman Mabel, as she was always known, would have known Frederick Bawden, a worker in her father's mineral water factory.

Unmarried, Mabel became pregnant in 1898. Her baby, Charles Guy Penrose, was born in London on Guy Fawkes Day, November 5th 1898 at the West Square home of Miss Charlotte Sharman, the founder of a girls' orphanage in the adjacent Austral Street, Southwark.

Charlotte was a Baptist spinster who dedicated her life to the care of young girls who had lost at least one parent. Her standards were high and she had firm ideas on the care of young girls. The orphanage was home to over two hundred girls, all of whom managed to bath every Friday night using just four baths. They were well looked after, and even sent on seaside holidays. The girls

were trained at the home, and on leaving at the age of seventeen were much sought after as nannies, teachers and domestic servants. The surviving records of the orphanage show that it was not its usual practice to take in male children or unmarried mothers for their confinement, although a few small babies were useful for the girls' training. Certainly Charles was soon "boarded out".

Charlotte Sharman with one of her charges

Although no father is named on his birth certificate, Charles' daughter Jane shares DNA with a great granddaughter of Albert Edward Rowe of Plymouth, who was running a newsagent in Redruth at the time od Charles conception. The match is consistent with a relationship of half second cousin once removed or closer, with 77% probability. She also shares DNA with a 3 great grandson of Albert's maternal grandfather William Gill the sawyer.
There are no obvious legitimate links between the Rowe family, who were almost exclusively from Devon, and the Penroses who were deeply rooted in Cornwall. Jane's paternal DNA is 50% Cornish and 50% Devon and Somerset, which strongly suggests that Albert Edward Rowe was the father of Charles Guy Penrose.

Later, Mabel was joined in London by Frederick Bawden, a senior employee at the factory, who had spent two years managing a goldmine in India before returning in 1899, and was now working as a commercial traveller. Though they did not marry, Mabel took the name Bawden and lived with him in Kennington. Two years later, another baby, Gertrude Ella, was born. Her birth certificate names her parents as Frederick Charles Bawden and Lucretia Mabel Bawden formerly Penrose. It is notable that Frederick Bawden included Charles in his name here, although he was not so baptised. Fred could not have been the father of Charles, however, as he was in India at the time of his conception.

Frederick Bawden in around 1915

Soon afterwards Frederick and Mabel parted. Frederick returned to Illogan to live with his mother at the hotel in Robartes Terrace and work again in the Penrose factory. He married Winifred Evans, a young Illogan girl and cousin of Mabel, in 1901, and had five boys, Booth, Fred, Ronald, Harry and Robert. He became a rate and tax collector until his retirement. He died in Illogan in 1945, age 71.

Mabel went to live with her sister Ellen Eddy in St Just, the most westerly town in England. There she met and married James Williams, a miner aged 40, and had five further children. Together, they ran a public house in the area. James died in 1922 and Mabel married Josiah Trembath, a local market gardener. They lived in Mousehole, where she died, aged 69, in 1946. A gravestone in Sheffield Road cemetery, Paul, near Penzance, records the death of James Williams in 1922 and that of his wife Lucretia Mabel in 1946, but does not give her surname as Trembath.

Charles and Gertie in Colorado in the 1970s. They had not seen each other since Gertie emigrated in

Mabel's first two children, Charles and Gertrude, were boarded out and brought up by Henrietta Buckland in Gypsy Hill, London. Both children used the name Bawden at home and at school in Shooters Hill. At the time this area was at the extreme edge of London's urban sprawl, bordering countryside. Charles left school at the earliest possible date, his fourteenth birthday, and worked in the vulcanising industry. Using the name Buckland, he joined the RAF in 1918, and served for six months as a batman at the headquarters of

the newly formed service, which had been established at the Hotel Cecil in the Strand, London. After his demobilisation at the end of the First World War, he returned to the hotel to work as a reception clerk.

In 1921, still living at Whiteley Road and using the name Buckland, he married Lillian Louise Rogers, his first wife. Their only child was born in Camberwell in 1923, and retired to Exmouth, Devon after a career as a jeweller. He died there in 2016, aged 92. He and his wife Joyce had two children, David and Michael. Michael is an artist living in Exmouth with his wife and two children.

Peter Buckland with his son Michael and Michael's wife Sarah

Gertrude, Charles' sister, was a civil servant. She married Thomas Henry Scott, also a clerk in the civil service, in 1923, and worked at the War Office during the Second World War. Thomas committed suicide in 1943, and in 1947 Gertrude married Joseph Dunn, an American soldier, and moved to the United States. She lived in Colorado for many years before moving to Fontana, California, where she died in 2003 at the age of 103.

Charles separated from Lillian, but she was not prepared to grant him a divorce, which required the consent of the aggrieved party at that time. He stayed in South East London and in 1929 formally changed his name to Buckland by deed poll. He had in fact been using this name for some time. He ran a series of newsagent shops, and during the war, although too old for active service, may have served in the Home Guard. At this time he owned a property in Five Ashes, East Sussex, where he kept chickens.

After the war, Charles met his second wife Eileen Joan May Brown, though they had two children before they were able to marry. Eileen had changed her name to Buckland before the birth of their first child. Throughout his life, Charles kept the existence of his previous wife and child hidden from his other children, and it was only after his death in 1981 that his daughter Jane found and met her half brother and his family.

She recalls that during her childhood that on family holidays in Devon, Charles would often disappear for a day on business, and speculates that he may have been visiting relatives of his mother.

Jane Davies and, right, her grandmother Mabel Penrose

Jane married Roger Davies and they have three children.

Mabel and James' children were Mary, Margaret, Jim, Stella and Jack. Mary married Louis Hicks in Penzance in 1924 and had three children, Godfrey, Tom and Lucretia Mary. Lucretia was a schoolteacher before her retirement and had two children, Vivienne and Duncan, from her first marriage to Alan Johns. She now lives in Guernsey. Godfrey was a fisherman. He and his wife Doreen had three children, Stephen Deborah and Jimmy.

Mabel and James' second child, Margaret Mabel, was born in 1904 and married John Harvey. Their son, John Penrose Harvey, still lives in West Cornwall.

Their third child, Jim Williams, was born in 1905. He and his wife Elsie had two children, Ivor and Gwynneth.

Stella Williams was Mabel and James' fourth child, born in 1908. She married Cyril Ford, and they had two children. Their first, Diana Mary married David Jenkins at Paul church in 1956 and was a concert pianist. She had a daughter Stella, who in turn has a daughter Sarah. Stella William's second daughter, Elizabeth Stella "Diz" Ford, married Mark Stubbings, and lived all her life in the family home opposite the church in Paul where she and many other members of the family were married. She has two daughters, Morvah and Demelza.

In 2009, Morvah left a high profile job in London to return to Paul to run for a time the pub her grandmother ran before her.

Jane with Diz and Diana at their first meeting in 2007

John Penrose Williams, known as Jack, Mabel and James' fifth and last child, lived all his life in Penzance until he died childless in 1986

The fourth of the six daughters was named **Ethel Penrose** after the third daughter, her elder sister who had died as a baby. Ethel was an artist, and she too had an eventful life.

Ethel married Alfred Whapshare in Redruth in 1903. Alfred's father was a baker from Wiltshire. At the time of his marriage Alfred had adopted the first name Montague, though he went back to plain Alf later.

Alf Whapshare, Ethel's first husband

Ethel and Alf had two children, Hilda and Alf. Hilda married Edmund King and lived to the age of 99. She died in Sidmouth in 2004, and as far as can be seen left no children. In the 1920s Alf junior met Catherine Ashton, a young widow whose husband had died tragically at the age of 26. She already had two sons, Kenneth and Colin. She took on the name Whapshare although they did not marry. In a tragic co-incidence, Catherine's second husband Alf also died at the age of 26 in 1932, when she was seven months pregnant

with their daughter Alfreda June Whapshare, now known as June. June lives in Saltash, quite close to her daughter Lynda. Her son, Mervyn is an artist in Looe. Her half brothers, Kenneth and Colin, were very relieved to survive their 26th years – both lived into their 70s.

In 1908 Ethel Whapshare had a third child Thomas Henry Whapshare. Strangely, the birth certificate also gives that as the father's name. In 1914 she had another child, Samuel Whapshare. This time no father was named on the birth certificate, and the mother's address was Greenbank House, the Plymouth workhouse. In 1917, twins followed, again with no named father. They were named Bill and Reggie, but Reggie died soon after birth. Sometime after this, Samuel became known as Reg Whapshare. This is confirmed by his entry in the 1939 Register, which cites Reginald Whapshare, born 3 February 1914, the date on Samuel Whapshare's birth certificate. Reg married Rhoda White in 1941. Bill Whapshare seems to have been adopted by the Deacon family and lived all his life in Liskeard. He had three sons, one of whom, Dr Bernard Deacon, is a lecturer at the Institute of Cornish Studies in Exeter. During the whole of this period, Alf Whapshare was serving in the Rifle Brigade, and saw much service overseas.

Ethel's fecundity continued. In 1920 she had a further daughter, Kathleen, with Lawrence Rodd, to whom she was not married. Kathleen had two daughters, one of who, Lynda Buxton, still lives in Devon.

Although this was the last of Ethel's seven children, her adventures were not over. In 1928, she married James Williams, a smallholder, even though she was almost certainly still legally married to Alf Whapshare. Alf was not himself blameless, either. He also married again, in 1924, describing himself as single.

Ethel's second marriage was also fated, and a few years later James died in a shotgun accident.

Ethel Williams nee Penrose

Ethel died in Plymouth in 1954, at the age of 72.

Richard and Eliza's fifth daughter although sometimes known as Charlotte, was actually registered as **Lottie Penrose**. She married Richard Carne and had her first child, Richard Penrose Carne, in 1910. Lottie was unwell after the birth and baby Richard was nursed by Lottie's sister Mabel. Lottie had a second son, Kenneth, in 1912, but sadly he died in 1916 at the age of four.

Lottie Carne with her sons Richard and Kenneth

Richard junior in turn married and his daughter, Melanie lives with her husband Phillip Stephens, a builder, in Mousehole. They have a daughter Sophie.

Richard Penrose Carne and his wife with their daughter Melanie and her husband Phillip Stephens. The family resemblance between Richard and Mabel Penrose's first child Charles, right

The sixth and last daughter of Richard and Eliza was **Frances Maud Penrose**, known as Fanny. She was born in 1890 and in 1912, some years after the death of her parents, married Reginald Maddern in Penzance. They had two children, Reginald Francis and Ellen. Reginald Francis married Kit and had a son Christopher. Ellen married Bert Cummings in 1940. They worked together as chauffeur and house keeper to the well-known racing driver Prince Chulalongkorn of Siam.

Prince Chula Chakrabongse of Chulalongkorn was a son of Prince Chakrabongse Bhuvanath, the fortieth of the seventy-seven children of King Chulalongkorn of Siam. The King's father Mongkut was the inspiration for the musical "The King and I". The Prince was educated in England and in 1927, established a motor racing team called White Mouse Racing. Driving English Racing Automobiles, he and his cousin Prince Bira were well-known in international racing circles.

Ellen and Bert had one child Martin. He and his wife Alexandra have two children, Richard and Emma. Martin ran a motor dealership in Bodmin until his death in 2018.

Richard Penrose came from a family of twelve siblings. His ancestors were exclusively Cornish, and steeped in the mining industry. His five daughters produced twenty-four children; seventeen were legitimate and all of these were born in Cornwall. Of the other seven children, two were born in Cornwall, three in West Devon and two on a fairly brief sortie to London. The family has a history of longevity; nine of the daughters' children lived into their nineties. Many of the family still live in Cornwall.

Penrose ancestors abound in Cornwall, and the name can be traced back to Sennen, in the thirteenth century. There is still a settlement called Penrose near Sennen today.

Penrose near Sennen, Cornwall

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